

Dear distinguish friends

This is my second time here at Wilton Park and I feel at home, with good friends around me, and I would like to thank you Alison for creating this space that is not only very Interesting and inspiring but also an opportunity that I feel to heal and find strength.

When I received the invitation to be part of the meeting, I thought - since our last meeting, things have only gotten worse. More rounds of war, more fear, and more despair. The cycle of trauma is deepening and expanding to new areas.

It is hard for me to stand here as an Israeli. I am ashamed of the leadership of the country I love so much. I am ashamed of the enormous damage and loss my country is causing.

This tension—between my belief that there must be a home for the Jewish people and the current reality—is unbearable. It raises huge questions, and I think many Israelis share this feeling as well.

We are all looking towards October election, hoping and working hard that the results will bring an end to a cruel government, which is driven by the personal interests of the person leading it. The Israeli public is tired of Netanyahu but in this era of populism and hate, there is no expert like him at manipulation, making parts of the public continue to believe he is the only one who can lead Israel.

Many of my friends are in despair. They feel that even the biggest protests Israel has ever seen, which brought hundreds of thousands into the streets—and just to understand, imagine protests where 5% of the country's population shows up—failed to bring down the corrupt and aggressive government that took power in Israel.

Luckily for me, I have my work on the ground. This work, even during this very difficult time, gives me strength. I meet large groups of

people—Jews and Arabs, religious and secular, in the center of the country and in the periphery—who believe and understand the obvious: the two peoples living in the Holy Land must live side by side in dignity, tolerance, security, and peace.

In my remarks today, I want to focus on two main areas of my work – interfaith work and education. These fields are, of course, deeply connected.

In the interfaith field—in the face of extremism, we work with religious leaders that are ready to take the risk and be part of a joint action, which is really not a popular thing now in Israel. An Initiative in Haifa ended up in a inter religious committee, and later on in more mix cities and areas. You might be surprise to hear that a central partner for that project is the ministry of interior and religions, understanding the importance of our work in preventing violence. Jewish, Muslim, Christian and Druze religious leaders understand their responsibility and the importance of this moment, and they are ready to act to prevent the danger of violence expanding further. These processes are not easy at all. The daily reality enters the conversation and makes it very hard to build trust and partnership, but we must continue even with all the challenges.

In the field of education—my generation experienced times when the word "peace" was not a dangerous or cursed word. We believed and saw that peace and agreements could turn from a dream into reality. But the younger generation—those born from the year 2000 onwards—all they know is wars, military operations, sirens, and fear. Social media has become a traumatic poison. Young children have been exposed to horrors, leaving a hole of fear and despair in their hearts. The hate-inducing leadership only makes the educational challenge harder at this time. We continue to act through

educational programs that also operate mainly in mixed cities. We work through religious values, and through meetings with people from the other society who understand how important it is to hold an empathetic, inclusive conversation, and above all, a conversation of shared responsibility.

This is exactly why we are currently developing the "Haifa Model" in collaboration with the Haifa Municipality and the University of Haifa. Our goal is to reshape the local education system to raise what we call a "multicultural graduate." We want every young person growing up in the city to graduate with the cultural competence, the tools, and the mindset needed to live and thrive in a shared society, turning diversity from a source of friction into a source of strength. That model will hopefully spread to more areas and cities in the country.

Together with Ghadir, we continue our work with women, as you heard earlier—both around the book, through initiatives on the ground, and through our new initiative on reconciliation work by establishing a center that can promote these values on a larger scale.

The center will be called Musalacha- a Reconciliation and hope. At its core, the center will focus on bringing together groups of women leaders- who have real influence in education, civil society, media, and politics. We are planning a living space where we can offer ways to deal and hopefully heal the inter generational trumas, and build real trust. It is an ambitious project, but investing in women's leadership is exactly the kind of sustainable infrastructure we need on the ground right now. We believe that we can't give up, even when the challenges are many. By creating examples of success, we will later on expand our model to more and more areas.

Many of the women we interviewed for the book spoke about the heartbreak they feel, that they have been working for so many years

to end the conflict and promote peace, and how much they fear they will pass away before they see the change arrive. When I heard their words, I felt a deep connection to them. But as Sharon Rosen said—whom many of you know—a person does not always get to enjoy the fruits of the tree they planted and cared for. But the notion that I am part of the effort to create a better world is more important to me than any reward.

Thank you very much to Allison, Fadi, Sarah, Michael, and the entire organizing team. I deeply appreciate your sincere concern, your care, and your support—it means a great deal for me.